

school without fear of being gunned down in their classrooms. We've seen this kind of violence on a college campus in Blacksburg, at a high school in Columbine, and now at an elementary school in Newtown.

Since 1982 there have been more than 60 mass murders carried out with firearms across this country. In the last 5 years alone we have had 19 mass shootings. That's a rate of more than one every 4 months. These are alarming numbers, and we as a Nation must be willing to do something about it.

There have been calls by some for meaningful action, but I implore my colleagues that what we really need is immediate action. The issue of eradicating gun violence is ripe, and we must act now.

The first thing we must do is ban assault weapons of all types. Their only purpose is to kill the largest amount of people in the shortest amount of time. Tragically, the Newtown shooter used a military-style weapon to perform his evil deeds.

□ 1040

Weapons with the ability to carry out such deadly force do not belong on our streets. I challenge anyone to justify the use of these weapons anywhere but on the battlefield for which they were designed.

Proponents of gun rights say that there is an absolute right to bear arms. I disagree. All rights are subject to reasonable restrictions. But what is absolute is that I have a right to leave my home without being shot. People have the right to worship their God without being massacred. The children of Sandy Hook Elementary had an absolute right to go to school without being gunned down. No one sends their child to school expecting that they won't come home.

I understand there are many factors that contribute to these unforgivable acts of violence, but we must start somewhere. It is time for us to have a serious and deliberate conversation about a comprehensive national gun policy that eliminates loopholes in the laws and requires uniform background checks. Enforcing current laws is not getting the job done. We must do more to ensure that our citizens feel safe and secure in their homes, schools, movie theaters, shopping malls, and neighborhoods. We cannot wait for another Tucson, Aurora, Oak Creek, or Newtown massacre. We must take action now.

I ask my colleagues, where do you stand? Whose side are you on? I'm on the side of every man, woman, and child killed in senseless violence. Who in this House can be against common-sense gun safety regulations? Anyone who is is on the wrong side.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE DANIEL K. INOUE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) for 5 minutes.

Ms. HIRONO. I stand here today to give tribute to my friend, Hawaii's senior Senator—our country's senior Senator—DANIEL K. INOUE. With your passing, my friend, I want to tell you that no one can fill your shoes.

In Hawaii, we jokingly say that there are three economic drivers in our State: tourism, defense, and Senator INOUE. And it's true. His work and his unselfishness in serving his State and country are unparalleled.

He served our country during war at a time when people who looked like him were not considered American citizens. He did it and served our country honorably and with respect and with incredible strength and character. He did it because he believed in what our country should and could be. Our country—great; our country—about service; our country—about our children and our future; our country—honorable. His personal legacy in my home State of Hawaii could and will never be matched. Never.

Hawaii, we will never be able to thank Senator INOUE for his service and what he has done for us. It is too great to put into words, and it cannot be done in a 5-minute tribute.

But what I want to give my aloha and thanks to Senator INOUE for, is bigger than all of us: for his commitment to serve and protect our brave men and women who fight for our country, for his dedication and willingness to work in a bipartisan fashion, for standing up for the ideals of freedom and justice that our country is founded upon, for always standing up for our proud heritage in Hawaii.

Senator INOUE was, as so many have recognized, a genuine patriot, a uniquely proud American, and a man and a leader always true to his word. But Senator INOUE was also an architect and a builder. Half a century ago, he had an architect's vision of the Hawaii we inherit from him today. Over his many decades of service, he displayed a builder's skill—pouring the foundation of the modern and vibrant Hawaii that we inherit from him today. That is his legacy.

So the greatest tribute we can pay Senator INOUE is to acquire his vision, to apply his skills and build on the remarkable foundation he laid for us.

I know this is the tribute that I will pay to my friend. I know this is the tribute that the people of Hawaii will pay to Senator INOUE. Hawaii drew incredible strength from the life and service of DAN INOUE, and it is that very strength—strength of purpose and strength of character—that will keep Hawaii and our country strong for years to come.

The Senator INOUE I knew and loved, and that we all loved and respected, would expect this of Hawaii and us, and we will not let him down.

#### THE SHOOTING TRAGEDY IN NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Now it's Newtown, 20 innocents and their six teachers. More tears, more burials, but will we heed its meaning? Will we break the gun lobby spell that has held us in thrall to a psychosis that has left us numb and paralyzed with each passing tragedy? I think so.

First step in any recovery program: admit the problem. We have too many weapons with too much ammunition that is unregulated, unchecked, and unjustified. We need to restore rigorous background checks to keep dangerous weapons away from criminals and the mentally ill. We need to close the gun show loophole. We need to facilitate database sharing among law enforcement agencies—Federal, State, and local.

Next step: limit access to weapons of mass killing. No hunter needs an Uzi; no citizen needs an assault-style weapon for self-defense. No other civilized society has allowed the argument that any restriction of any kind is a direct assault on our personal liberty, except us.

Next: require registration and stiff penalties for failure to secure dangerous weapons in the home or workplace while banning their presence in a select number of public places such as churches, police stations, mental health facilities, recreation and youth centers, government buildings, and—oh, yes—schools.

The gun lobby has bullied and intimidated us for too long. Reasonable gun control measures like those just listed provide for public safety; they don't threaten it. The lobby loves to fall back on trite mantras that unfortunately have proved all too effective in silencing any meaningful public debate heretofore: "Guns don't kill; people do." "Any restriction real or imagined contravenes my Second Amendment rights to bear arms."

Oh, really?

Even Justice Scalia, in writing his unprecedented and deeply flawed Heller opinion, acknowledged that it did not preclude reasonable gun control measures. Even Scalia has had to admit in his originalist interpretation of the Second Amendment he cannot answer whether the Constitution envisioned a universal right to possess rocket launchers, RPGs, stinger missiles, or military assault weapons in our homes. That is the logical fallacy and folly of the argument of unrestricted rights to bear arms without limit. Its proponents allow for no check on this right in the Constitution. Even the First Amendment has limitations. So does this one.

We've been lulled into a passivity and fatalism with the logical fallacies and sometimes thuggish tactics of the gun lobby and its extreme right-wing allies at a terrible cost. Each year, guns kill